



Department of Development Services
Planning Division
Meeting Minutes of the
Historic Preservation Commission &
Historic Properties Commission
(Approved)

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION &
HISTORIC PROPERTIES COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 18, 2009**

Commissioners Present

Greg Secord
Michael O'Connell
Alan Ambrose
Catherine Connor
Jonathan Clark

Staff Present

Roger J. O'Brien
Kim Holden
Kenneth Schwartz
Jillian Hockenberry

Commissioners Absent

Lynn Ferrari

Mr. Roger O'Brien stated that he received a voicemail from Commissioner Ransom stating that he had submitted a letter of resignation from the Commission. Chairperson Secord stated he would call Commissioner Ransom to confirm this.

I. Historic Review

a. 36 Gillett Street – Addition of a new sanctuary for the Christian Fellowship Church

Kenneth Schwartz presented a summary of the application and explained the recommended conditions of approval.

Mr. Peter Chow of Oak Park Architects stated that the addition will be constructed of brick in a similar color to the existing building. He discussed that the reason for the flat roof on the addition is so the second story of the existing wing can remain viewable from the street.

Commissioner Ambrose asked if the applicant had submitted a site plan and Mr. Chow stated that they had not. Commissioner Ambrose then asked if the reason why they wanted to tear down the porch was so they would not lose parking spaces from the lot in the rear of the structure. Mr. Chow stated he had not done a parking calculation in order to determine whether parking would be lost because of the addition. However, he described that the reason for the proposed location of the addition was because it correlated best with the layout of the floor plan.

Mr. Schwartz stated that in 2002 when the church took over the property, a variance was granted to allow offsite parking.

Commissioner Ambrose asked if they were doing any work on the front of the existing building. Mr. Chow stated that they would not be doing any work other than the basic maintenance.

Commissioner O'Connell asked how the existing wing visually matched the architecture of the rest of the structure. Mr. Chow stated that he was not sure if the existing wing is the original, however that it is a very compatible match to the rest of the architecture.

Commissioner Clark expressed his concern with the idea that the addition would be filling the open space that gives the structure its residential character.

Commissioner Secord stated that since the report did not include photographs of the surrounding streetscape that it is difficult to visualize how the proposed addition would fit in.

Commissioner Ambrose stated that since the addition will be increasing the square footage, that there will be a need for an increase in parking. However, Mr. O'Brien stated that the parking requirements for a church use are based on the number of seats, and since there will not be an increase in capacity there is no need for more parking.

A discussion occurred amongst the Commissioners regarding the need for windows on the front of the addition in order for it to match the rest of the structure. More discussion occurred regarding how the pitch of the roof should match the 90 degree angle of the existing structure.

Commissioner Ambrose noted that there may be some necessary work to be done to the existing structure and questioned whether the applicant was committed to preserving the historic character of the property.

Mr. Lawrence Jones, the applicant, stated that the church has spent all of their efforts on the inside of the building since they have occupied it. He stated that they do recognize that there is work that needs to be done to the exterior.

A discussion occurred amongst the Commissioners regarding ways to preserve the porch or ways to reuse pieces of the porch within the addition.

On a motion made by Commissioner O'Connell, and seconded by Commissioner Ambrose, the following resolution with amended conditions was approved:

Whereas: The Hartford Historic Properties Commission has received an application for Historic Review for the construction of a building addition as depicted in plans entitled, "Renovations Christian Fellowship Church: 36 Gillette

Street Hartford CT” prepared by Oak Park Architects LLC dated 10/21/09;
and

Whereas: The subject property is listed on the National Register as a contributing resource in the Nook Farm and Woodland Street Historic District; and

Whereas: The renovations are consistent with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards because they accommodate the reconfiguration of the sanctuary with minimal changes to defining characteristics of the building; and

Whereas: Recessing the building plane of the addition and articulating the two building masses with the glass wall in the baptistery will highlight the original structure while minimizing the scale of the addition; Now therefore be it

RESOLVED: The Historic Properties Commission hereby approves the renovations depicted in the plans entitled, “Renovations Christian Fellowship Church: 36 Gillett Street Hartford CT” dated 10/21/09 with the following conditions:

1. That the mature maple tree in the front yard be protected during construction and saved.
2. The porch materials are removed with the intent that the porch elements be made available for re-use on other historic properties in Hartford.
3. Two windows are added on the front.
4. The peak of the roof matches the 90 degree angle of the existing building.

The following Commissioners voted in favor of the motion: Secord, O’Connell, Ambrose, and Connor. Commissioner Clark voted in opposition of the motion.

II. New/Old Business

On a motion made by Commissioner O’Connell, and seconded by Commissioner Ambrose, the minutes of September 16, 2009 were approved.

Mr. O’Brien stated that the applicant of 77 Wadsworth Street had resubmitted their application and staff determined that there was nothing new or changed from the first submittal. Therefore, after consulting with Chairperson Secord, Mr. O’Brien told them that there was no reason to go before the Commission again. He told the applicant that the application would have to be changed in some way in order to go before the Commission.

Mr. O'Brien stated that Catholic Charities has asked to demolish 53 Wadsworth Street. He stated that he told the applicant that before they submit their application they may want to attend any future meetings regarding 77 Wadsworth Street in order to hear the related discussion.

Commissioner Secord discussed the collapsing of the wall at the Public Safety Complex and suggested that the developer come to update the Commission on the status of the repair.

Commissioner Clark stated that he had spoken with Robert Clark at 80 Oxford Street. He stated that the approved solar panels look great on the structure and that Mr. Clark suggested the Commission have some standards to refer to for similar future proposals. He told Commissioner Clark that he would email suggestions to him.

Commissioner O'Connell discussed a meeting he attended regarding a new Porches Program. The program provides funding for residential properties that need rehabilitation to the front exterior and landscaping. The reason for the Historic Preservation Commission and Historic Properties Commission to be notified of this program is because many of the properties receiving funding will have to go before the Commission.

Commissioner Secord stated that he had spoken with the New Haven Preservation Trust Executive Director and Board President. They told Commissioner Secord that they would like to duplicate a Historic Ordinance such as the City of Hartford's.

Mr. O'Brien stated that the most recent POCD panel was regarding Hartford's natural and built environment and he encouraged the Commissioners to read that chapter of the plan.

III. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Roger J. O'Brien, Secretary/Director